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ABSTRACT

A study compared the visibility and participation of women working in United States television with that of women working in television in other countries. Video tapes of five consecutive evening news broadcasts in 1986 from the United States, Japan, Sri Lanka, Colombia, and Jamaica were analyzed for such data as the proportion of women anchors, the proportion of domestic and foreign stories covered by women reporters, and the topics reported on by women reporters as compared to those reported on by men. Findings included: (1) no women reported on any of the five biggest news stories of the week in any of the five countries studied; (2) the percentage of women on the major United States network newscasts has declined from an overall average of 21% in 1979 to 9% on NBC, 10% on ABC, and 13% on CBS in 1986; (3) the United States and Japan made only token use of women reporters for domestic stories (17% and 0%, respectively), while the developing nations had much larger percentages of women reporters (27% in Colombia, 33% in Jamaica, and 66% in Sri Lanka); (4) no overseas stories were reported by women correspondents in any of the five countries; and (5) all of the science/health stories were covered by women, whereas all of the stories on government, crime, and disaster were covered by men. (Three tables of data are included, and 25 references are attached.) (MHC)

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TELEVISION'S INVISIBLE WOMEN:

A FIVE-NATION STUDY OF ANCHORS, REPORTERS AND CORRESPONDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study of one week's newscasts in 1986 found that developed countries (Japan and the United States) make little more than token use of women TV journalists, while in developing countries (Colombia, Jamaica and Sri Lanka) women have a more prominent role, both as reporters and anchors. The bias against women as foreign correspondents held in all five countries; likewise, the assignment of women to cover health/medical stories seems universal. The presence of women on US network TV newscasts has declined markedly from the 1970s.

Paper presented to the Committee on the Status of Women, Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, 1986 annual convention, Portland, July 2-5.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The status of women working in US media is well documented (Beasley 1985; Flander 1985; Holcomb 1986; Marzolf 1977; Sanders 1986; Stone 1986; and Wilson 1984). To find out about media women in other countries is more difficult, but one can turn to publications such as Media Report to Women for single-country profiles and reports. However, virtually no systematic cross-cultural studies have been done.

Such studies have great value, as the acheivements of women in one country could inspire women in others. Conversely, such research could unearth universal problems that cut across cultures. If one takes the extensive research on US media women as a baseline, many comparisons suggest themselves.

In the late 1980s, do women working in other countries face the same problems as women in the United States--differential pay, story assignments and promotions? Have US women come closer to wielding power than elsewhere in the world? Or can a developed country such as the United States afford the "luxury" of tokenism in media jobs, while developing countries must use all the talent available? Are US media at a stage through which other countries have passed and still other countries will pass--a stage where women find themselves thwarted by a glass ceiling? Or do cycles of progress differ from nation to nation?

The present study can begin to shed light on these quest-

ions. It focuses on television because in the late 1980s, women in US network television can well benefit from the insights of a multi-country study. There are signs that progress made from the early 1970s is being eroded (Flander 1985).

According to Renee Poussaint, WJBM-TV, Washington, D.C., "There is a decline actually in the visibility and participation of women reporters on the air. . . Men deciding that women were getting too much control, too much visibility, too much influence in the industry, and beginning to block certain channels of upward mobility" (Beasley 1985). Women at ABC have been meeting since 1983 to try to overcome unequal treatment--including less air time and 30 percent less pay than men (Landis 1986). Their actions "reflect an industy-wide belief that women are no longer assiduously sought after as network correspondents" (Flander 1985).

This study, a content analysis, cannot discern beliefs and thoughts, but it can compare the "visibility and participation" of women working on US television with those in other countries. Likewise, it cannot determine what, if any, effect an increase of women might have on the definition of news, but it can show what types of news women do cover and what similarities exist across cultures.

Furthermore, in its present form this study cannot draw conclusions about trends and cycles. However, plans are already being made for 1988 to expand this five-country pilot study to 10 countries, then follow the 10 each year for as long as possible to track changes over time.

II. RELATED STUDIES

Numerous "census" studies have documented changes in women's presence on US network television, but fewer are available for other countries. The content of women's on-air reports and audience reactions to male vs. female newscasters have been researched to some extent in the United States, but less so overseas.

US Research

A number of studies in the 1970s found no perceived differences between male and female newscasters (e.g., Stone 1974; Whittaker and Whittaker 1976). Researchers at Boston University concluded that women spokespersons "are more trusted by the public than men." However, market research on radio newscasters found men's voices to elecit more positive responses (Lerner 1982).

Before ABC hired Barbara Walters in 1976, a survey showed that 46 percent of viewers preferred a female newscaster, 13 percent preferred a male and 41 percent had no preference (Woodruff 1983). A more recent study (Wilson et al, 1986) found that subjects judged a male and female anchor as equally credible and effective in reading the same national news story, but judged the mnale less effective and credible than the women in reading local news.

Singleton and Cook (1982) analyzed 1,130 news reports on ABC, CBS and NBC newscasts in 1979 to see if "female correspondents generally report the same kinds of news stories as their male counterparts." After coding the reports into 20 topic

categories, they found that foreign affairs, the federal government and the economy accounted for 56.4 percent of the news reports. When they looked at the sex of the reporter, they discovered significant differences (at the .05 level or below) in seven topics: women reported fewer foreign affairs, economy, disaster and feature stories, but more federal government, environment, women's issues and social problem stories.

Of the 1,130 reports by correspondents, women delivered 169 (25 percent). Women reported 16.1 percent of stories appearing either first, second or third in the newscast (including 16.2 percent of the lead stories), figures comparable to their numerical representation in the sample and an improvement over past years. In 1974-75, women reported only 2 percent of the first, second and third stories on network TV newscasts (Marzolf 1977).

Women represented 23 percent of all television news personnel in 1977, 26 percent in 1979 and 31 percent by 1982, where the percentage remained through 1985 (Stone 1982 and 1986). At the networks, in 1971, ABC had two women reporters, CBS had one and NBC had four. By 1974 ABC and CBS each had five women, while NBC had eight (Marzolf 1977).

Ten years later, in late 1984, women accounted for higher staff percentages than their air time would imply. They were 16 out of 90 reporters at ABC (18 percent); 22 of 105 at CBS (21 percent); and 14 of 64 at NBC (22 percent). However, a survey by NOW's Legal Defense and Education Fund (Wilson 1984) found that women filed only 59 of 576 nightly news stories May 15-June 15.

1984, on the three networks (8.4 percent on ABC, 14.7 percent on CBS and 7.9 percent on NBC).

Stories are filed by both US-based reporters and foreign correspondents working out of network bureaus, then selected for the nightly news at network headquarters. The lack of women in bureau and headquarters management positions may partly explain why women get short shrift in air time. In 1985, only four women held top management jobs at the networks.

Also in 1985, ABC had one of its domestic and foreign bureaus headed by a woman; CBS had four; and NBC had six. Nationwide in 1985, only 8 percent of TV news directors at network-affiliated stations were women (Stone 1986).

As low as these figures for women managers and on-air reporters are, they represent domestic news operations almost entirely. The bias in television against sending women overseas remains, even though the bias in print media has started to erode (Erlick 1982). In the case of the Associated Press, an EEOC settlement in 1980 hastened the change. (When the EEOC complaints were initiated in 1975, AP had no women out of 400-500 overseas staff).

In 1971, Aline Saarinen became the first woman network foreign bureau chief when NBC assigned her to Paris (Marcoli 1977). In 1982, Hilary Brown coordinated ABC's coverage of the El Salvador elections and Martha Teichnor covered Beirut for CBS, but these exceptions virtually confirm the rule. Since foreign assignments often lead to promotions later on, a policy of bias cuts off an avenue of advancement for women. In 1985, ABC

and CBS had no female foreign correspondents, while NBC had one (Hosken 1986).

Just as women's representation on TV news staffs leveled off in the 1980s after gains in the 1970s (see above), so has their share of anchor positions at local stations. Women were 1. percent of anchors in 1972, 20 percent in 1976 and 36 percent in 1982 (Stone 1983). The proportion remained the same 1982-1985. On the network evening newscasts, the gain that Barbara Walters made in 1976 when she became a regular ABC co-anchor has been lost except for women on weekend newscasts. Now "three relatively young and definitely handsome solo male anchors reign" on the nightly news (Flander 1985).

Non-US Research

Detailed information about women reporters, correspondents and anchors appearing on TV newscasts outside the United States is hard to come by, especially in developing countries. Most research describes women working in all mass media. For example, women are 5-10 percent of the total media personnel in East Africa (Carty 1980), 40 percent of personnel in Cuba (Carty 1985) and 27 percent of personnel in Singapore "Our women. . ."(1980). A study in Norway specifically on television found that in 1977, 25.3 percent of the voices were female; by 1982, 27 percent were female, an increase of 1.7 percent. However, these figures do not isolate news from other programs (Abrahamson 1984).

A cross-national personnel survey concluded that US media women lead the world in holding positions of responsibility (Carty 1984). But little cross-national research exists describ-

ing women on television. One such study that analyzed TV newscasts in 10 European countries (Thoveran 1986) found a "severe under-representation of women among the journalists appearing on the screen--the average was one woman for six men (14.5 percent).

Research Questions

Because extensive past research has treated women journalists on network television in the United States, the following questions, when answered with recent data, may be used to chart changes in "census" figures and findings by Singleton and Cook (1982):

1. What proportion of journalists on ABC, CBS and NBC nightly newscasts are women?
2. What proportion of stories reported by women appeared first, second or third on ABC, CBS and NBC nightly newscasts?

The following questions will enable cross-cultural comparisons:

3. What proportion of anchors on national evening newscasts are women?
4. What proportion of domestic stories are reported by women?
5. What proportion of overseas stories are reported by women?
6. What topics did women reporters and correspondents report on as compared to those that men reported on?

III. METHOD

In the summer of 1986, researchers involved in this project contacted acquaintances in a number of countries, asking them to tape the main evening newscast for Sep. 1-5. The late fall of 1986 was spent transferring the taped news, received in various formats, to the VHS format.

During winter 1987, initial viewing was done and notations made to discover whether any tapes had missing days. They did. The following five, chosen for detailed analysis, represented the best mix of countries with the fullest complement of newscasts:

The United States (CBS)	First World, Western
Japan (NHK)	First World, Asian
Sri Lanka (Rupavahini)	Third World, Southeast Asian
Jamaica (JBC)	Third World, Caribbean
Colombia ("24 Horas")	Third World, Latin American

Unfortunately, Sept. 1 was missing from the Jamaica tapes and Sept. 5 from the Japan tapes. However, since four completed tapes did exist for both Sept. 1 and 5, the researchers decided that they had enough data (23 broadcasts) to proceed.

The five nations are categorized by Freedom House as having free media systems, except for Sri Lanka, which is listed as partly free. They represent diverse models in government control, regulation, funding facilities and language usage.

In Colombia, the government owns the stations, but leases prime-time hours to private entrepreneurs for programming. Commercial advertisements appear on the news programs, as the time purchased in bulk is resold to individual advertisers.

Both the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation (JBC) and Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK) are public corporations modelled on the BBC. JBC television went on the air in 1963, financed by government grants and advertising, but the government directed it to become self-supporting in the early 1980s.

NHK relies on license fees imposed on all sets for its funding. With 1.8 TV receivers per household in Japan, NHK has an annual budget of more than $1 billion. NHK has about the same number of TV stations as the commercial broadcasters, which concentrate on local programming.

The government-operated TV service in Sri Lanka began broadcasting in 1982. Three stations cover the entire island. Sri Lankan news is broadcast three times: once in Tamil for the large Indian population, once in Sinhala for the native majority and once in English.

Although commercials appear on both Colombian and U.S. newscasts, in this study the United States, represented by "The CBS Evening News," is the only commercial broadcasting system. It is also the only newscast that does not include a regular national sports segment and, along with Colombia, one of two that does not include a national weather forecast.

Sports and weather forecasts were omitted from coding for comparability and to keep the focus on news. Sports was defined as those stories grouped together and introduced as "sports news." Other isolated stories elsewhere in the newscast related to athletics and weather (e.g., earthquakes) were included.

To address research questions 1 and 2, relating to all JS

networks, the Vanderbilt University Television News Index and Abstracts were used. To address all the other research questions, a coding sheet (see appendix) was developed. Anchors were defined as visible, in-studio readers of the news. Reporters were defined as persons reporting from a domestic location, either appearing on camera or doing narration, who had actually covered the story they were describing; correspondents met the same criteria but reported from overseas.

Five story types commonly appear on newscasts: 1) those read by the anchor(s), often accompanied by in-studio graphics; 2) those narrated by the anchor(s) but featuring remote videos, often with natural sound; 3) those delivered by journalists reporting from domestic locations outside the studio; 4) those delivered by the network's own correspondents reporting from overseas; and 5) those delivered by correspondents reporting for other networks that have sold stories to the home network.

The narrated stories--types 1 and 2--often featured co-anchors' voices alternating frequently within the same story for variety and pacing. Thus a linking of one anchor, male or female, with each story was impossible.

For the third type, any story with a discernible non-studio journalist, whether he or she was shown on camera, was coded for gender. The story was counted as "non-studio," even if the anchor introduced and partly narrated it.

For the fourth type, narrators were assumed not to be bona fide foreign correspondents unless strong evidence presented itself to verify that they were. For example, a woman's voice

narrated a story for the Colombian news program about protests against cigarette sales in South Korea, but from all indications, the network had no foreign correspondents, much less one in Korea. In all probability, this and many other foreign stories with a "passive" narrator came from a video service such as Visnews.

The fifth story type was not counted in determining the importance of women journalists at a news operation. The smaller networks who could only afford to cover foreign news by subscribing to an overseas service had no choice as to the gender of correspondents covering those stories. For example, Jamaica used many women journalists in its own operations, but had to depend on British services for foreign stories. To code the various British men as if they worked for Jamaica Broadcasting would have given a skewed picture of JBC.

After the number of total stories, domestic-reporter stories and foreign-correspondent stories were noted, the percent of each type filed by women was calculated. To get an idea of the importance or "presence" of the anchor, the percentage of the total stories that the anchor(s) read or narrated was calculated.

The non-studio stories were then divided into the following categories used by Singleton and Cook (1982) to see if male and female journalists were being given different types of assignments:

1. Government and politics, including defense policies
2. Disaster/accident, including accident prevention
3. Science, including medicine and health
4. Crime, including white collar crime
5. Labor/economy/business, including agricultural economits
6. Human interest/ people /features
7. Foreign affairs, including all stories reported from abroad
8. Consumer protection
9. Social problems, including drug abuse
10. Entertainment/ culture/ art
11. Institutions, including schools and education
12. Environment
13. Transportation
14. Energy
15. Religion
16. Courts
17. Women's issues
16. Other

If problems with faulty tapes prevented learning much about the substance of the story, no coding was attempted or forced.

IV. RESULTS

A total of 338 stories were analyzed on the newscasts of the five countries being studied. The week of Sep. 1-5, 1986, had its share of monumental stories that attracted worldwide attention, but they did not squeeze out domestic news in any of the five.

The five biggest stories of the week, with the total minutes devoted to each, were: 1) the non-aligned summit in Zimbabwe (34.07 minutes); 2) unrest in South Africa (23.66); 3) the Pan Am hijacking in Pakistan (21.66); 4) the AeroMexico/ private plane collision in California (20.17); and 5) the collision of a Soviet passenger liner and freighter in the Black Sea (6.92). As we will see, no woman covered any of these stories for her home network in any of the five countries studied.

1. Women journalists on ABC, CBS and NBC nightly newscasts

Of the 20 journalists who appeared at least once during the week on ABC, two were women (10 percent); of the 23 on CBS, three were women (13 percent); of the 21 on NBC, two were women (9 percent). In fact, all the women did appear just once, whereas many of the men (19) men appeared on two, three or four newscasts.

In other words, the women, few as they are, do not get proportionately as much air time as their male colleagues. Of 34 non-studio stories at ABC, women reported only two (6 percent); of 34 stories at CBS, women reported three (9 percent); of 31 stories at NBC, women reported two (6 percent).

These figures show a marked loss of ground for women in the past seven years, even when allowing for the smaller 1986 sample. There was a decline from the 25 percent of reports that women delivered in 1979 and the 21 percent of on-air journalists that they represented in 1979 (Singleton and Cook 1982). The present study even shows a decline over the past two years. For example, in 1984, women at CBS filed 14.7 percent of stories and represented 21 percent of journalists (Wilson 1984).

2. Position of stories by women journalists on ABC, CBS and NBC

In 1979, women had reported 16.1 percent of first, second or third stories, including 16.2 percent of lead stories (Singleton and Cook 1982). In 1986, women reported none of the first, second or third stories. Again, the difference in time frames (one complete week vs. a sampled year) should be noted.

4. Proportion of women serving as anchors: five nations

Table 1 shows that Jamaica has the strongest female "presence" on its nightly newscast, five out of eight daily appearances being women. The United States, represented in this part of the study by CBS, is the only country of the five with no women serving as anchors. Japan has a 50/50 ratio, since it featured the same male/female co-anchors every night, similar to the team pattern used on local newscasts in the United States.

Counting was done day by day due to differences in anchor systems from country to country. Both Jamaica and Sri Lanka use a "stable" of rotating anchors; in Jamaica, for example, sucier-

Table 1. Women Anchors on TV Newscasts in Five Countries, 1986

	Sep.1	Sep.2	Sep.3	Sep.4	Sep.5	Total
A. Number of women/total anchors						
Colombia	0/1	1/2	0/1	0/1	0/1	1/6= 16%
Jamaica	---	1/2	2/2	1/2	1/2	5/8= 62.5%
Japan	1/2	1/2	1/2	1/2	----	4/8= 50%
S.Lanka	0/1	0/1	0/1	1/1	0/1	1/5= 20%
U.S.	0/1	0/1	0/1	0/1	0/1	0/5= 0%
B. Stories read by anchor/total stories						
Colombia	7/11	8/14	5/9	11/13	9/14	40/61 =66%
Jamaica	---	17/21	20/25	17/22	17/23	71/91 =78%
Japan	10/12	12/14	13/14	9/11	---	44/51 =86%
S.Lanka	10/13	13/16	12/13	13/14	10/12	58/69 =85%
U.S.	8/13	13/17	9/14	11/19	4/8	45/71 =61%

ces saw five different faces in four days of this study. Colombia had the same male anchor every day, who was joined on one day by a woman co-anchor; thus the "presence" of women shows up as 16 percent (one of six appearances) for Colombia.

Both Sri Lanka and the United States use a single anchor. One of the women in the rotating crew anchored the news Sep. 4 in Sri Lanka, accouting for one of five appearances. Only the United States uses a single, never-changing anchor.

The table also shows that the US system relies the least on anchors to deliver stories, since it has resources to fund a stable of reporters and correspondents. Interestingly, Japan would seem to have the resources for correspondents, but NHK relies more heavily on anchors (who deliver 86 percent of stories) than any of the other four coutries.

* * * INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE * * *

4. Proportion of overseas stories reported by women: five nations

No overseas stories were reported by women correspondents in any of the five countries. The following few overseas stories for each country were reported by men: Colombia, none; Jamaica, none; Japan, two; Sri Lanka, eight; and the United States, 11. The high number for Sri Lanka resulted from its sending its own correspondent to the non-aligned summit in Zimbabwe, to which it devoted 23.6 minutes of air time during the week. CBS' overseas stories included Nicholas Daniloff and South African unrest.

5. Proportion of domestic stories reported by women: five nations

Table 1 shows that Japan had no women reporters, while

the United States (CBS) had only 17 percent of its stories covered by women. The percentages for Jamaica (33 percent) and Sri Lanka (?? percent) may look high, but the actual numbers of stories are low; equipment and personnel in short supply even for covering local stories in these countries. Colombia uses reporters quite extensively and has a respectable representation of women doing this work (six of 22 stories, or 27 percent).

* * * INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE * * *

6. Topics covered by women vs. men reporters: five nations

Table 3 shows the range of story topics covered by both men and women. The numbers are too small to permit significance testing, but a few observations can be made. The most prevalent type of news, business/economy, was covered by both women and men. However, the second most prevalent type, disaster/accident, was covered only by men. The third most prevalent type, crime, was covered only by men except in Colombia.

Interestingly, all of the government stories were covered by men, whereas all of the science/health stories were covered by women. The small numbers can only indicate some possible lines of future inquiry about universal associations of story assignments and gender.

* * * INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE * * *

Table 2. Women Reporters on TV Newscasts in Five Countries, 1986

	Sep.1	Sep.2	Sep.3	Sep.4	Sep.5	Total
Domestic stories reported by women/total stories						
Colombia	2/5	2/6	0/3	1/3	1/5	6/22= 27%
Jamaica	---	1/2	0/0	1/3	0/1	2/6= 33%
Japan	0/2	0/1	0/0	0/2	---	0/5= 0%
S.Lanka	0/1	0/0	0/0	1/1	1/1	2/3= 66%
U.S.	0/4	2/6	0/2	1/5	0/1	3/18= 17%

Table 3. Topics Covered on TV Newscasts in Five Countries, 1986

		Sep. 1	Sep. 2	Sep. 3	Sep. 4	Sep. 5
Topics covered by women/topics covered by men						
Colombia	F	4,4	4,5		3	3
	M	1,12,12	1,1,4,5	18,+,+	1,5	2,2,4,5
Jamaica	F	---	6		6	
	M		4		1,5	12
Japan	F					
	M	5,2	2		2,6	---
S.Lanka	F				5	5
	M	10				
U.S.	F		9,3		3	
	M	2,2,3,5	2,2,5,11	1,2	4,4,5,11	1

1. Government and politics, including defense policies
2. Disaster/accident, including accident prevention
3. Science, including medicine and health
4. Crime, including white collar crime
5. Labor/economy/business, including agricultural economics
6. Human interest/ people /features
7. Foreign affairs, including all stories reported from abroad
8. Consumer protection
9. Social problems, including drug abuse
10. Entertainment/ culture/ art
11. Institutions, including schools and education
12. Environment
13. Transportation
14. Energy
15. Religion
16. Courts
17. Women's issues
18. Other

+=faulty tape

V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Pending further research, this small "map" of five countries presents some surprising differences and similarities regarding the status of women on television. If nothing else, the cross-cultural approach removes the temptation that consumers of US television may have to resort to "we've come a long way baby" assessments. Self-congratulations are not yet in order.

Similarities

The ban against giving women overseas assignments seems universal. (In fairness to Colombia and Jamaica, however, we should note that neither women nor men worked as foreign correspondents in those countries.) The discrimination may be the result of paternalistic feelings that foreign reporting is too dangerous or strenuous for women, that women could not get stories effectively because of perceived machismo or legal barriers or that women would be too conspicuous to move freely. On the other hand, foreign assignments may simply be seen as plums handed out via the old boys' network.

While barriers against women covering hard news seem to be falling, gatekeepers still associate certain types of stories with women. Women covered all health stories that were broadcast during Sep. 1-5. These included a new technique being used in hospitals and a report/warning about a food contamination outbreak (both Colombia), as well as stories on an AIDS hospital and new research on exercise and the heart (both United States). The only other CBS story by a woman--on Reagan's drug war--was

coded as "social problems," but had a strong health angle.

Differences

The differences between the developed and developing countries stand out strikingly. Neither Japan nor the United States made more than token use of women to report domestic stories--three of 18 stories on CBS, none at all on NHK. All three stories on CBS could have been shelved for later use as features in the event of major breaking stories; indeed, on Sep. 5, the day of the Pan Am hijacking in Karachi, no stories by women appeared.

Colombia, Jamaica and Sri Lanka all had a strong female presence in domestic reporting, with stories covering a wide range of topics: crime, economics, health and human interest. Perhaps developing countries realize that mobilizing the best talent of both sexes makes sense, whereas developing coutries can afford to resort to tokenism.

Colombia, Jamaica and Sri Lanka all made use of women anchors. Japan did as well, but one could not help noticing how young the Japanese woman appeared next to her male co-anchor. Age was deemed hard to judge accurately, so no attempt was made to do so in the formal coding. However, the age disparity did not seem so great between male vs. female anchors in the three developing countries.

Effects

Speculations about what would happen if more women reported and edited the news can easily deteriorate into platitudes and stereotypes. Without attempting to prove for certain what would

happen if the feminization of journalism schools filters into the industry, some idea of what we are now missing can be put forward. Writing in Ms., Wilson (1984) concludes that "women bring a different acculturation to the workplace, simply because they have grown up female."

According to Diane Sawyer, "Where you have a choice, and you always have choices, on the margins you may end up with a very subtle nuance, an inclusion of something that might not have been included otherwise." Sylvia Chase of "20/20" believes that the women's movement has added topics to the agenda of what is considered to be newsworthy--rape, wife abuse, family relations (Wilson 1984).

Journalism Professor Catherine Covert has stated that women's values, which emphasize "concord, harmony, affiliation, community," may change long-established news values. Women may be "less drawn to writing news as a series of conflicts." Even the vocabulary of news may change its sexist overtones, with the difference between "hard news" and "soft news" blurring and the status of the latter rising (Beasley 1985).

Specifically in overseas coverage, the debate about whether or not women can handle such assignments has changed: the discussion now centers on whether women have some advantages or whether male and female correspondents report stories in the same ways. Logistical and perceptual advantages apply even in macho cultures such as Central America's, where "American women correspondents are finally coming of age" (Erlich 1982).

Women can get their foot into the door or snag an important

interview both because of a "tradition of courtesy" and a tendency not to see women as a threat. Furthermore, better stories may result because people will talk more easily to women and because women "may see things men don't see," according to Washington Post writer Stephen Rosenfeld (Erlick 1982).

Needs for future research

The small number of countries and limited time span of this study imply a need to explore the same questions in greater depth. The United States may be atypical of Western nations in the barriers it puts in the path of women TV journalists. The number of Third World countries needs to be expanded as well, adding African and Arab cultures especially.

With more information on story assignments, statistical analysis such as carried out by Singleton and Cook (1982) would be possible. Does an apparent universal association of women with nurturing result in assigning them to do health coverage?

Questions abound about the interplay of culture and growing up female. Do women in fact have an advantage in covering Latin countries? What about other Western countries? Asian, African or Arab countries? Furthermore, what would be the interplay of cultures if women from developing countries covered developed nations, or if women from developing countries covered dissimilar developing countries?

Research on these questions could be useful in schools of journalism and training programs which are attracting more women each year. In one USIA program in Tunisia in summer 1982, about one-half of the trainees are expected to be female. The future of Third World journalism may well rest in female hands.

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UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF COMMUNICATION

1986 INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION NEWS PROJECT 1986

)ay of week: M T W TH F Month: Aug. Sep. Date: _____

ANCHOR name(s)_____Sex_____

TOPIC _____ Anchor/other

Locale: studio/ other _____ Sex _____

Time Counter_____

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